

Message Text

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14

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01 SAM-01 ACDA-10 EB-07 IO-11 MC-02

/120 W

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R 090400Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6961

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 1238

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CB, SW

SUBJECT: SWEDISH DIPLOMAT REPORTS ON VISIT TO CAMBODIA

REF: (A) STATE 049239, (B) STATE 054860, (C) STOCKHOLM 0673,
(D) STOCKHOLM 1226 (ALL NOTAL)

1. SWEDEN'S AMBASSADOR TO PEKING, KAJ BJORK, WHO IS ALSO ACCREDITED TO PHNOM PENH, HAS BEEN INTERVIEWED BY SWEDISH PRESS SERVICE ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO CAMBODIA. HE WAS AMONG FIRST GROUP OF DIPLOMATS PERMITTED TO ENTER COUNTRY SINCE REVOLUTIONARY TAKEOVER IN APRIL OF LAST YEAR. INTERVIEW WAS CARRIED IN STOCKHOLM'S TWO MORNING DAILIES - DAGENS NYHETER AND SVENSKA DAGBLADET. COMMENTING ON GROUP'S VISIT TO SIEM REAP, BJORK IS UNCLASSIFIED

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QUOTED AS SAYING ONLY THAT THEY WERE SHOWN LARGE BOMB CRATER AND

RATHER COMPREHENSIVE DAMAGE IN CENTER OF CITY BUT HE WAS UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHETHER DAMAGE WAS RESULT OF AERIAL BOMBING. HE REFERS NEXT TO DEEP TRACES OF WAR IN OTHER PARTS OF COUNTRY AND OBSERVES THAT US HAD APPARENTLY ATTEMPTED WHOLLY TO DESTROY CAMBODIA'S COMMUNICATION NETWORK THROUGH BOMBING.

2. BJORK RECALLS THAT PHNOM PENH SEEMED LIKE DESERTED CITY WITH ROWS OF CLOSED SHOPS, EMPTY HOUSES AND VERY LITTLE TRAFFIC. HE NOTICED SQUADS OF HEAVILY ARMED SOLDIERS AT LARGER INTERSECTIONS. THERE WERE NO FUNCTIONING TELEPHONES OR TELEGRAPHS, NO POSTAL SERVICE AND EXTREMELY FEW CONTACTS WITH SURROUNDING COUNTRIES. ONLY SIGNIFICANT OUTSIDE LINK IS AIR CONNECTION WITH PEKING WITH FLIGHTS TWICE MONTHLY. GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS WITH CITIZENRY APPEAR TO RELY HEAVILY ON RADIO WITH LOUDSPEAKERS EVERYWHERE EVIDENT, EVEN IN RICE PADDIES. MONEY ECONOMY HAS BEEN ABOLISHED AND PEOPLE RECEIVE FOOD AND OTHER NECESSITIES THROUGH GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTING ORGANS. BJORK WAS ALSO INFORMED BY REFUGEES IN THAILAND THAT BARTER TRADE IS ALSO DEVELOPING. DIPLOMATS SAW NO EVIDENCE OF STARVATION OR MORE RECENT FORCED POPULATION MOVES REPORTED BY REFUGEES.

3. BJORK MENTIONS LONG TALKS WITH IENG SARY WHO TOLD HIM THAT NEW REGIME HAD NO ALTERNATIVE TO DRASTIC STEP OF MOVING MOST OF PHNOM PENH'S POPULATION TO COUNTRYSIDE. CITY AT THAT TIME HAD HUGE REFUGEE AND SLUM POPULATION SUFFERING FROM HUNGER AND ILLNESS AND TRANSPORT SYSTEM WAS INCAPABLE OF SUPPLYING ITS NEEDS. ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO MOVE POPULATION TO WHERE FOOD WAS AVAILABLE. BJORK ALSO OFFERS OWN VIEW THAT FURTHER REASON FOR MOVE WAS REGIME'S DESIRE TO UTILIZE ALL POSSIBLE MANPOWER TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT AND THUS DEMONSTRATE ITS INDEPENDENCE OF OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE.

4. ALL LAND IS NOW OWNED BY STATE OR BY AGRICULTURAL COLLECTIVES, BJORK SAID. PRIVATE GARDEN PLOTS OF TYPE WHICH ARE COMMON IN SOVIET UNION, CHINA AND NORTH VIETNAM ARE NOT PERMITTED IN CAMBODIA. STATE HAS ALSO UNCLASSIFIED

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TAKEN OVER COUNTRY'S ENTIRE INDUSTRY. NEW FACTORIES ARE LOCATED FAR FROM URBAN CENTERS IN LINE WITH REGIME'S DECISION TO PREVENT GROWTH OF CITIES. BJORK WAS INFORMED THAT PHNOM PENH NOW HAS POPULATION OF BETWEEN 100,000 AND 200,000. RICE CULTIVATION TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER ACTIVITIES AND MOST OF POPULATION HAS BEEN MOBILIZED FOR THIS PURPOSE, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF NEW IRRIGATION PROJECTS.

5. BJORK WAS TOLD THAT SOME 600,000 VIETNAMESE HAVE LEFT COUNTRY SINCE NEW REGIME TOOK POWER. HE THOUGHT THIS MAY BE PARTIAL EXPLANATION OF COUNTRY'S SEVERE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES SINCE VIETNAMESE HAD BEEN VERY IMPORTANT FACTOR IN CAMBODIAN COMMERCE. THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS OF MILITARY CLASHES BETWEEN VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN FORCES ALONG BORDER WITH SOUTH VIETNAM, BJORK REPORTED. HOWEVER, CAMBODIANS DID NOT MENTION ANY BORDER PROBLEMS ALTHOUGH THEY EMPHASIZED THAT PORTIONS OF VIETNAM AND LAOS HAD BELONGED AT ONE TIME TO CAMBODIA. IT WAS EVIDENT, BJORK OBSERVED, THAT CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT DESIRE ANY CLOSE COOPERATION WITH REST OF INDOCHINA AND CAMBODIANS WERE VISIBLY IRRITATED WHENEVER CONCEPT OF CONSOLIDATED INDOCHINA CAME UP IN CONVERSATIONS.

6. NEW REGIME IS EXTREMELY NATIONALISTIC, BJORK ADDED, AND APPEARS TO PLACE NO SPECIAL IMPORTANCE ON ITS RELATIONS TO ANY POWER. IN TALKS ABOUT CHINA, CAMBODIANS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR CHINESE ASSISTANCE, BUT WITHOUT INDICATING ANY PARTICULAR FRIENDLINESS TOWARDS CHINA.

7. BJORK PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO PRINCE SIHANOUK WHO IS NOW CAMBODIA'S HEAD OF STATE. SIHANOUK SEEMED TO BE IN GOOD HEALTH, BJORK SAID, AND SEEMED UNCHANGED FROM THEIR EARLIER ACQUAINTANCESHIP IN PEKING. HOWEVER, HIS FUTURE APPEARS UNCERTAIN. ON MARCH 20 ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD FOR A LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY WHICH WILL BE MADE UP OF 150 FARMERS, 50 WORKERS AND 50 SOLDIERS. ASSEMBLY WILL IN TURN APPOINT STATE PRESIDUM. NEW CONSTITUTION PRESENTED IN JANUARY IS SILENT RE HEAD OF STATE, BUT BJORK BELIEVES SIHANOUK WILL BE ELECTED

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PRESSIDENT OF PRESIDUM ALTHOUGH WITHOUT ANY REAL POWER.
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